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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CHISINAU 000983

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STATE FOR EUR/UMB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/02/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PBTS](#) [PINR](#) [RS](#) [MD](#)  
SUBJECT: KALMAN MISZEI BELIEVES MOLDOVA NEEDS 5-  
PLUS-2

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Kelly Keiderling  
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (C) Summary: In a September 29 meeting EU Special Envoy Kalman Mizsei told Ambassador that he did not believe the Russians were committed to a 5-plus-2 meeting. Mizsei opined that Moldova needed the transparency of the 5-plus-2 process to protect it from walking into a Russian trap. The U.S. and EU shared a strategic interest with Moldova in using the negotiating process to ensure that Russian troops leave Moldova. End Summary.

Mizsei Questions Russian Commitment to 5-plus-2

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¶12. (C) Ambassador met with EU Special Representative Kalman Mizsei on September 29. Mizsei noted that Russian negotiator Nesterushkin did not seem committed to holding a 5-plus-2 meeting at this time. Mizsei recounted that, during the previous 3-plus-2 round in Vienna on September 8, when discussing plans for the next meeting, Mizsei had proposed that it be held in Vienna or Helsinki. Knowing that Nesterushkin liked to travel, Mizsei had calculated that the Russian would be more likely to support holding a meeting in Vienna or Helsinki than in Odessa. Still, Mizsei noted that Nesterushkin had made no formal commitment to participate. Neither the GOM nor the Transnistrian leadership were present at the September session, and it was understood that the OSCE would have to work with them to make the October 7-8 meeting happen.

Moldova Needs 5-plus-2 to Avoid Russian Trap

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¶13. (C) Mizsei opined that Moldova needed the transparency of the 5-plus-2 process. He said that if Moldova was left to the mercy of the Russians, it would end up in a trap. Mizsei said that he was relying upon Voronin not to walk into a Russian trap. Mizsei planned to congratulate the Moldovan president on successfully navigating the difficult diplomacy of the past month and a half since the Georgian crisis began. Voronin had shown good diplomacy; he had resisted making any bad statements and avoided irritating the Russians.

¶14. (C) Two schools of thought existed in the post-Georgia world, opined Mizsei. One held that Russia now had the psychological momentum and had created fear in the region. Russia would use this fear to pressure Moldova in Transnistria negotiations. The other school suggested that Russia needed to show some positive signs after Georgia. Mizsei suggested that the only chance to test the second, more benign

alternative, was to tell the Russians very clearly that constructive behavior meant going back to formal 5-plus-2 talks.

Mutual Interest in Having Russian Troops Leave

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¶ 15. (C) Mizsei stated that the EU's interest, as much as the Moldova's interest, was to ensure that the Russian troops left. The departure of Russian troops was a critical part of the settlement package, Mizsei believed. The other key issue was neutrality. The Russians stated that they needed international guarantees but, noted Mizsei, with its many members the EU was not free to give such a guarantee.

The Voronin-Smirnov Meeting that Didn't Happen

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¶ 16. (C) According to Mizsei, the Russians had forced Smirnov to agree to a meeting with Voronin (1-plus-1) followed by a Voronin-Smirnov meeting with Medvedev (2-plus-1). The Russians insisted that these meetings were only consultations, and not meant to replace the 5-plus-2 format. Mizsei noted that it was in Russia's interest to have the Voronin-Smirnov meeting happen. By insisting that the meeting be in Bender, Smirnov had established preconditions which, Mizsei noted were not appropriate. However, Mizsei also criticized Voronin for making an unhelpful comment about Smirnov's regime belonging on the scrap heap of history.

CHISINAU 00000983 002 OF 002

EU More Open to Moldova's European Aspirations

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¶ 17. Mizsei said that the EU would accelerate its relationship with Moldova. The next step would put Moldova in the same status with Ukraine and Georgia. The EU planned an acceleration of relations, deepening free trade and facilitating Moldovans' ability to obtain EU visas. Mizsei asked that the USG reinforce the message that Moldova was at a historical moment and needed to conduct elections in a proper fashion and improve its investment climate through deregulation. If Moldova made progress in these two areas, then by next year it could be the "darling of the Eastern Partnership," as Ukraine had problems and Georgia was mired in conflict. "Moldova can fly," he asserted. Ambassador agreed that the USG also needed to pay more attention to Moldova than in the past.

Comment

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¶ 18. (C) If the Russians don't show up at the Vienna 5-plus-2 meeting, we could question Russia's commitment to resolving the Transnistria conflict. If Russia shows up and the Transnistrians don't, the limits of Russian power would be clear. The Russians are in a somewhat uncomfortable position at the moment, unsure if they can deliver the Transnistrians. This is only a moment, however. Russia still holds the key to resolving the Transnistria conflict and has many levers with which to pressure Moldova.

KEIDERLING